

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06525 211527Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC 4439

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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USIA FOR IOP/M, IPS, IBS, INA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, XF, LE

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. MIDEAST POLICY

REF: USIA 11406

1. SUMMARY. IN SPITE OF GROWING DOMESTIC TENSION, BEIRUT PRESS OF MAY 21 DEVOTES SIGNIFICANT COMMENT TO U.S. MIDEAST DIPLOMACY. PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B", COMMENTING ON SECRETARY KISSINGER'S REAFFIRMATION DURING VIENNA MEETINGS WITH GROMYKO, OF AMERICAN WILL AND ABILITY TO DEFEND ITS FRIENDS, URGES PRESIDENT FORD NOT TO COME TO SALZBURG WITH INDOCHINA COMPLEX. LEADING PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-ANWAR" AND PRO-SOVIET LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN "AN-NIDA" STRONGLY CRITICIZE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S STATEMENTS ON MIDEAST. LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR", COMMENTING ON RECENT JAMES RESTON COLUMN URGING PRESIDENT FORD TO DECIDE WHICH ISRAEL HE WILL SUPPORT, NOTES THAT BALANCED POLICY IN MIDEAST WILL STRENGTHEN

U.S. POSITION IN OTHER PARTS OF WORLD. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 06525 211527Z

2. COLUMNIST MUHAMMAD NAQQASH WRITES IN PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B": "REPORTS FROM VIENNA INDICATE THAT MR. KISSINGER TOLD MR. GROMYKO THAT 'AMERICA'S STRENGTH HAD NOT BEEN AFFECTED BY WHAT HAD OCCURRED IN INDOCHINA AND THAT IT WAS STILL ABLE TO PROTECT ITS FRIENDS AND ALLIES'.... NO ONE, PARTICULARLY SOVIET FONMIN, BELIEVES THAT STATE AS STRONG AS AMERICA HAS BEEN WEAKENED MILITARILY AS RESULT OF WHAT HAPPENED TO IT IN INDOCHINA. ENTIRE WORLD KNOWS THAT U.S. DEFEAT THERE WAS POLITICAL MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.... OUR GREATEST FEAR IS THAT AMERICA MAY HAVE GOTTEN A COMPLEX AS RESULT OF ITS DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA AND IS NOW SEEKING WAR... TO PROVE TO ITSELF AND OTHERS THAT IT IS STILL STRONG. WE HOPE PRESIDENT FORD DOES NOT COME TO SALZBURG WITH INDOCHINA COMPLEX AND DOES NOT CONFUSE MIDEAST SITUATION WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN SITUATION."

3. COLUMNIST ELIAS BADAWI WRITES IN LEADING PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-ANWAR"; "SCHLESINGER'S ... WARNING MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN 'HOT SPOTS' WHERE THERE ARE SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO WHAT AMERICA CONSIDERS ITS REAL INTERESTS. HOWEVER, SITUATION THAT LATEST STATEMENTS OF AMERICAN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAVE PAINTED WITH REGARD TO MIDEAST COMPLETELY CONTRADICTS LESSONS AND PRINCIPLES ON BASIS OF WHICH, ONE ASSUMES, WASHINGTON UNDERTOOK REASSESSMENT OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY. OPEN WARNING DIRECTED TO ARABS WAS NOT PROPERLY ADDRESSED. IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO ISRAEL, BECAUSE ISRAEL -- AS AMERICA'S PRESIDENT AND SECSTATE HAVE ADMITTED -- IS THE ONE THAT CHALLENGED AMERICA AND FOILED ITS PEACEFUL MEDIATION.... IT IS IN INTEREST NEITHER OF ARABS NOR OF AMERICANS THEMSELVES FOR AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO PERSIST IN POLICY THAT SCHLESINGER IS ENUNCIATING, FOR IT IS PRECISELY THAT POLICY WHICH BROUGHT ALL THESE DEFEATS, INDOCHINA BEING MOST RECENT, UPON AMERICA."

4. COLUMNIST FU'AD KAHIL WRITES IN FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL IN PRO-SOVIET LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN "AN-NIDA": "NEW AMERICAN STATEMENT ... BY SCHLESINGER CONFIRMS TO ANYONE WITH TWO EARS IN ARAB WORLD THAT AMERICA'S POLICY REMAINS AS IT WAS, WITHOUT CHANGE OR REASSESSMENT.... STATEMENT ... IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT WAS ISSUED JUST BEFORE SALZBURG MEETING... IT CONFIRMS TRUTH OF WHAT SINCERE ARABS HAVE BEEN WARNING AGAINST -- THAT ANY RETREAT BEFORE AMERICAN IMPERIALISM CAUSES IT TO TAKE NEW STEPS IN SEARCH OF MORE RETREATS.... AMERICA IS TODAY PROFITING FROM RETREATS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 06525 211527Z

ARAB POLICY MANIFEST IN SPEECHES ... TO EFFECT THAT IT ALONE HAS 'KEYS' TO SETTLEMENT IN AREA TO UTTER THREATS AGAINST ARABS THROUGH SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.... EGYPTIAN POLICY IS CONTINUING IN PATH OF RETREATS BEFORE AMERICAN POLICY AT EXPENSE OF WELFARE AND RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

5. UNDER HEADLINE "THE AMERICAN DREAM", MICHEL ABU JAWDEH, CHIEF EDITOR OF LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR", WIRTES: "JAMES RESTON

HAS SAID THAT AMERICAN PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO ANSWER PLAIN QUESTION
OF WHICH ISRAEL WASHINGTON WILL DECIDE TO PROTECT -- ISRAEL IN ITS
PRESENT EXPANSION OR ISRAEL OF 1967? PROTECTION OF EXPAN-
SIONIST ISRAEL CANNOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH ANY 'COMPREHENSIVE VISION'
WASHINGTON DECIDES TO ADOPT. 'NEW AND CREATIVE AMERICAN THOUGHTS'
WILL LIKEWISE NOT EMERGE IF U.S. CONTINUES TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM
OF ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND SUBJECT OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE FROM
ISRAELI ANGLE WHICH HAS MORE IN COMMON WITH EARLY 20TH CENTURY
THAN WITH LATE 20TH CENTURY IF AMERICAN POLICY IS RECTIFIED
WITH REGARD TO ARABS AND ISRAEL, IT WILL BE EASY FOR IT TO BE
RECTIFIED IN REMAINING PARTS OF WORLD, FOR WHEN U.S. DECIDES TO
ADOPT POLICY BALANCED IN WORD AND DEED IN MIDEAST ... IT
WILL FIND ITSELF WITH MORE STRENGTH TO ACT IN DIFFICULT PARTS OF
WORLD. REASON FOR THIS IS SIMPLE -- AMERICA'S MOST IMPORTANT
INTERESTS ARE IN MIDEAST."
GODLEY

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